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ABSTRACT

Since the 1960s, crime and violence have been increasing in schools. This document focuses on crime involving physical harm or the threat of physical harm to a student or staff member on school grounds or at school events. Chapter 1 reviews past trends in school violence, describes the current extent of the problem, and explores some of its causes. Effective ways of dealing with chronic problems other than gang activity are covered in chapter 2, and actions specifically aimed at established gang activity are dealt with in chapter 3. Chapter 4 describes how to prepare for and respond to unpredictable crisis situations. Finally, prevention efforts are discussed in chapter 5. Based on recommendations of experts and experiential accounts of school personnel, the most important steps in combatting school violence can be summarized as follows: (1) acknowledging existing school violence, or the possibility of its developing in the future; (2) planning ahead for all reasonable contingencies; (3) developing written policies and clearly communicating them to staff and students; (4) training staff and students in techniques for applying those policies; and (5) cooperating with the community and other agencies. The appendix lists additional information about programs cited, and the names and addresses of nine persons interviewed. (44 references) (MLF)

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Schools Respond to Gangs and Violence

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Preface

Violence in the schools has never merited more concern than it does today. Although some types of school crime have decreased in recent years, violence seems to be spreading and intensifying—not only in the schools, but in American communities large and small. Educators, criminologists, and law enforcement personnel have worked to create effective methods to control current school violence and to prevent such violence in the future.

This OSSC Bulletin begins by surveying past trends in school violence and identifying the greatest current problems. Chapters 2 through 4 describe methods of deterrence and control. The final chapter examines promising prevention strategies, focussing on those used by several Oregon school districts. An appendix lists prevention curricula.

Joan Gaustad received her B.A. in Psychology from Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa, and her M.A. in Clinical Psychology from John F. Kennedy University in Orinda, California. She currently works as a freelance writer in Eugene, Oregon. Her *ERIC Digest* on "Gangs" was published in 1990 by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

Contents

	Preface	iii
	Introduction	1
1.	**The Scope of the Problem**	**2**
	The Seventies: The Safe School Study	2
	The Eighties	4
	Into the Nineties	5
	Gangs, Drugs, and Violence	8
2.	**Dealing with Chronic Problems**	**12**
	Acknowledging the Problem	12
	Assessment	14
	Deterring Violent Crime	15
	Keeping Weapons Out of School	19
	Combining Forces with the Community	20
	The Role of the State	22
	How Do You Know What Works?	23
3.	**Controlling Gangs**	**24**
	The Danger of Denial	24
	It's No Shame to Ask for Help	25
	Teaming up to Fight Gangs	25
	School Districts as Leaders	26
	Keeping Gangs from Moving in	27
	Antigang Actions	28
	Information and Communication	31
4.	**Crisis Situations**	**35**
	Deterrence and Prevention	35
	Preparing for a Crisis	36
	Handling the Aftermath	39

5. **Strategies for Preventing Violence** **41**
The Causes of Violent Behavior 41
Portland's Gang Prevention Program 42
Teaching Prosocial Skills 43
Coos Bay: Creating a School Community 46
Providing Job Opportunities 46
Helping Parents and Families 47
Helping Troubled Employees 47
Preventing Violence in Society 48

Conclusion **49**

Appendix **50**

Bibliography **51**

Interviews **54**

Introduction

Schools are an integral part of society. As attitudes and behaviors change, in society as a whole and in individual communities, those changes are reflected within the school. We live in a society in which police battle the rising tide of drug traffickers, drive-by gang shootings punctuate weekends, and half of all households in the nation possess firearms. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that violence reaches into the schools. Nonetheless, violence in the schools shocks and horrifies us. We want our children to be safe from harm—at least as safe in school as they are in their homes.

Since the 1960s, crime and violence have been increasing in schools. As public concern about violence grew, educators took new steps to tighten school security. Although some types of school crime have stabilized or diminished in recent years, violent crime is increasing. Educators, parents, and community leaders are striving to pinpoint the causes of violence and attempting to develop strategies to control or prevent it.

This Bulletin focuses on interpersonal *violent crime*, which can be defined as any crime involving physical harm or the threat of physical harm to a student or staff member on school grounds or at school events, whether the assailant is a student or nonstudent. Assault, robbery, extortion, hostage-taking, and murder are examples. Other discipline problems that violate school rules but do not actually break any laws, and property crimes such as vandalism and theft, are excluded.

Chapter 1 reviews past trends in school violence, describes the current extent of the problem, and explores some of its causes. Effective ways of dealing with chronic problems other than gang activity are covered in chapter 2. Chapter 3 focuses on gang activity. Chapter 4 describes how to prepare for and respond to unpredictable crisis situations, such as random killings and hostage-taking by intruders. Finally, prevention efforts are discussed in chapter 5.

I wish to thank all the school personnel who generously shared their time and insights with me. It is individuals like these who fight the daily battles against violence in the schools.

Chapter 1

The Scope of the Problem

In Lansing, Michigan, a sixteen-year-old boy shot a social studies teacher in the chest in the hallway outside the teacher's classroom. The boy was angry because he had been dismissed from the soccer team.

A physical education teacher was beaten unconscious by an intruder after he surprised the man rifling through students' gym bags outside a Bronx school.

During a shop class supervised by a substitute teacher, a Florida middle school student was trapped by two other boys in an area screened by a chalkboard at the back of the room. The boy was struck and threatened, then forced to perform oral sex on one of his tormentors while several other students acted as lookouts. The victim was an emotionally handicapped student who had been mainstreamed.

Incidents like these devastate the lives of the individuals involved. But how prevalent are they? This chapter summarizes trends in school violence from the 1970s to the present, examines some of the factors that contribute to the problem, and describes some geographic patterns in school violence.

The Seventies: The Safe School Study

In the early 1970s, at the direction of the U.S. Congress, the National Institute of Education sponsored the first comprehensive national study of school crime. The study was designed "to determine the frequency and seriousness of crime in elementary and secondary schools in the United States; the number and location of schools affected by crime...and how school crime can be prevented." Findings of this landmark study, entitled *Violent Schools-Safe Schools*, were published in 1978.

The Safe School Study found that teenagers were at greater risk of

Educators May Be Overly Cautious about Legal Issues

Following a series of court decisions concerning the constitutional rights of students, including rights against unreasonable search and seizure and expulsion without due process, the early seventies saw much media commentary on the "litigation explosion." Henry Luffler suggests that, as a result, many educators became so concerned about potential lawsuits that they may have been overly cautious when handling discipline problems. Luffler points out that the filing of unusual cases against school districts was widely publicized, but the resolutions of these cases—almost invariably in favor of the school districts—received far less publicity (Oliver Moles 1989).

Many educators had misconceptions about what the law really required. A 1977 study showed that the majority of teachers in six Wisconsin schools believed students had more rights than courts actually guarranteed—as did the 10 percent of students responsible for 90 percent of disciplinary infractions (Moles 1989).

James Rapp and his colleagues (1986) state, "There is little question that students engaging in crime and violence should enjoy rights constitutionally guaranteed to them. However, school officials have often given in to nearly every legal hurdle which student advocates have thrown before them whether or not actually required. In an effort to avoid litigation, school officials have often believed themselves to be stymied from maintaining a safe school environment"

In the early eighties, as the victim's rights movement gathered momentum, emphasis shifted away from the rights of perpetrators. In 1982, California voters approved an amendment to the state constitution known as the "Victim's Bill of Rights," later upheld by the state's Supreme Court. This amendment specifically guaranteed the right to safe schools, stating, "All students and staff of public primary, elementary, junior high and senior high schools have the inalienable right to attend campuses which are safe, secure and peaceful."

Though other states have not yet adopted similar amendments, the right tc safe schools is increasingly acknowledged across the country, with courts holding schools liable for injuries suffered by victims of crime and violence. Rapp and colleagues summarize the developing right to safe schools as follows:

- To be protected against foreeseable criminal activity.
- To be protected against student crime or violence which can be prevented by adequate supervision.
- To be protected against identifiable dangerous students.
- To be protected from dangerous individuals negligently admitted to school.
- To be protected from dangerous individuals negligently placed in school.
- To be protected from school administrators, teachers and staff negligently selected, retained or trained.

Educators now have a clear mandate—and responsibility—to safeguard their students and staff. Preventing all crime and violence is impossible, but administrators who make a diligent, conscientious attempt can protect their schools from liability in court (Suzanne Harper 1989).

becoming victims of violence while at school than when away from school. "Although teenage youth may spend at most 25 percent of their waking hours in school, 40 percent of robberies and 36 percent of the assaults on urban teenagers occurred at school"(NIE 1978).

In secondary schools 5,200 teachers—or .5 percent of all secondary teachers—were physically attacked each month. These attacks on teachers were almost five times as likely to result in serious injury than attacks on students.

The study determined that about 80 percent of personal violence took place during regular school hours. The classroom was the safest place in school for students; students were found to be at greatest risk when they were in hallways or on stairs between classes.

The risk of personal violence also increased with the size of the community. And it was more prevalent in secondary schools than in elementary schools, and greatest at the junior high level: for students aged twelve to fifteen, 68 percent of robberies and 50 percent of assaults occurred at school (NIE).

As disturbing as these statistics are, the reality was probably even worse. "The Safe Schools Study expends quite a bit of time and space describing and explaining just why and how certain kinds of offenses seem to be substantially underreported by educators," stated Robert Rubel (1986), director of the National Alliance for Safe Schools. (See Chapter 2, section 1, "Acknowledging the Problem.")

The Eighties

No comprehensive nationwide study on school violence has been conducted since the Safe School Study. However, a number of smaller studies have been done. Education specialist Oliver Moles (1987) studied trends in crime and student misconduct from the 1970s through 1986, using data from the National Education Association's Teacher Opinion Poll, the National Crime Surveys, and statistics reported to school police departments in several major cities. Moles concluded that except for an increase in attacks on teachers in the late 1970s, school crime overall either leveled off or declined.

But this statistical decline offers little consolation to the 91,000 teachers attacked during 1987—which translates to 4 percent of the nation's teachers, according to a National Education Association Member Opinion Poll. And threats were even more common than actual attacks. In some schools, researchers found that one-third of the teachers were threatened by students every month (Del Stover 1988).

Violence against students also continued at a distressingly high rate. In the first National Adolescent Health Survey, also conducted in 1987, 34 percent of a representative nationwide sample of eighth and tenth graders reported that during the previous year they had been threatened, robbed, or attacked while at school or on a school bus (Stuart Greenbaum and others 1989).

As a 1981 report entitled *Violence: Homicide, Assault, and Suicide* states, "Interpersonal violence may result in only a minor physical injury but

has a devastating impact upon the victim's life in terms of anxiety and subsequent restrictions in activities and movements" (Greenbaum and others). Students and staff alike suffer from the climate of fear created by violent incidents, whether or not they themselves have been victimized.

A 1983 study of Boston public schools revealed that almost 40 percent of students reported fearing for their safety in school or avoiding corridors or rest rooms (James Rapp and colleagues 1986). And 46 percent of the California school employees responding to a 1984 survey said they feared for their safety (Stover 1988). Alfred M. Bloch, assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of California at Los Angeles, reports examining many teachers with stress symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, stomach pains, and hypertension, who describe their schools as combat zones. Stover quotes Bloch as saying, "What we are seeing is very much akin to the kind of stress that soldiers...experience."

Into the Nineties

Due to the time lag between data collection/analysis and publication of findings, comprehensive "hard data" on school violence become scarcer the closer we move to the present. But the available data suggest that violence has escalated in the last several years. Says Cathryn Schar, supervisor of the Portland (Oregon) Public Schools Student Discipline Programs, "In society as a whole and in schools in particular, people are solving conflicts by fighting more. And more and more, solving conflicts involves weapons." Many police and school officials feel not only that weapons have become more prevalent and more powerful, but that they are more likely to be used.

Violence Increases Nationally

The report *Firearm Mortality among Children, Youth, and Young Adults, 1979-88*, released by the National Center for Health Statistics in March 1991, has deservedly attracted a great deal of media attention. "From 1979 to 1984," the report states, "the rate of death from firearms for Americans ages 15 to 19 actually decreased by 15 percent.... But from 1984 to 1988, the firearm death rate for teenagers increased by a dramatic 43 percent, rising 20 percent in 1988 alone"(Millicent Lawton 1991). In 1988, for the first time, a fifteen- to nineteen-year-old white male was more likely to die from a gunshot than from natural causes.

The figures were even more grim for black youths in the same age group, who were "more than 11 times more likely than their white counterparts to be murdered with a gun." Both the total firearm death rate and the firearm homicide rate for black teenage males more than doubled between 1984 and 1988, and the firearm homicide rate jumped 35 percent between

1984 and 1988, and the firearm homicide rate jumped 35 percent between 1987 and 1988 (Lawton).

Violence Increases in the Schools

California provides the best source of recent information for violence in the schools. Since the 1985-86 school year, the state has required all school districts to keep statistics on school crime. The figures collected during the first four years of reporting held some good news: certain types of crime, including theft, substance abuse, and felony sex offenses, actually went down. But assaults against both students and staff increased, and the category of assault/attack/menace increased by 16 percent (California Department of Education 1990).

The proliferation of weapons was particularly disturbing. During the same four-year period, incidents of weapons possession rose 28 percent overall, with a 100 percent increase in the number of gun-related incidents: a 50 percent increase in elementary schools, a 79 percent increase in middle schools, and a staggering 142 percent increase at the high school level (California Department of Education).

California was not the only state that witnessed an increase in violence in the schools. Florida experienced a 42 percent increase in gun incidents during the 1987-88 school year, reports the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence (1990). The report also notes that gun incidents in the Chicago Public Schools rose by 50 percent in 1988 and states that "hundreds of other school systems have reported similar trends in recent years." Nationwide, the National School Safety Center estimated that in 1987 135,000 male students carried guns to school daily, and another 270,000 did so at least once during the year (Center to Prevent Handgun Violence).

The presence of weapons, particularly guns, means that schoolyard conflicts that once ended in black eyes and bloody noses now sometimes end in death. The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence reports that nationwide, during the four academic years beginning with September 1986, at least 75 people were killed with guns at school, at least another 201 were severely wounded, and at least 242 individuals were held hostage by gun-wielding assailants. While many of these incidents were drug- or gang-related, others resulted from such "normal" schoolyard problems as personal disagreements, fights over girlfriends or material possessions, and name-calling.

Why the Increase in Weapons?

Why are weapons, especially guns, streaming into the schools? According to the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, one reason is availability. For every household in the U.S., there are two guns in the hands of private citizens. Unfortunately, a number of these guns are finding their way

into young people's hands. In crime-ridden innercity areas, students often carry weapons for protection against muggers, drug users who rob to support their habits, and attacks by gang members.

But carrying weapons creates new dangers. "'Kids say they need protection. But if they're armed, as soon as they get into an argument—boom!—they're going to use it," says James Perry, a former crack dealer turned youth counselor who is wheelchair-bound because of a shooting (Paul Barret 1991). A cycle of fear begins, prompting an escalation in an arms race where youths seek ever more powerful forms of "protection."

The result is incidents like the following one, reported at a recent California gang conference. A school security officer who received a tip that a student had a weapon on campus confiscated the student's duffel bag after wrestling him to the floor outside the school library. In the duffel bag was a fully loaded Uzi 9mm rifle. The boy thought another student in the library was out to get him—so he planned to get the other boy first (George Butterfield and Brenda Turner 1989).

Even adults are not immune to this weapons fever. Three San Francisco high school teachers admitted to reporters that they carry weapons. "One even displayed the razor-sharp blade he keeps in his jacket for self-defense. The teacher said, 'The kids have knives. They have guns in the lockers. What's to stop them from using them?'" (Butterfield and Turner)

A Frightening Change in Attitudes

A recent *Wall Street Journal* article describes a frightening change in attitudes among innercity residents of large U.S. cities:

> Broken homes and easy access to guns have existed for a long time without the current degree of slaughter. "In this town, the weapons have always been out there; it's the behavior of the young people that's changed," says [former police chief] Maurice Turner.... The victims and assailants are getting younger, the fatal disputes even more trivial. Drugs, though ubiquitous in the backdrop, don't figure directly in much of the bloodshed. "We now see senseless violence for the sake of violence," says Washington's U.S. attorney, Jay Stephens. Killings breed more killings. Death becomes normal, people numb to the waste of life. (Barret)

In these neighborhoods, guns aren't just for defense. The gun is an essential element of "style." "'Everyone from Edgewood got to carry a gun to be a man,' says Tim Edmonds, twenty, who lives in another housing project nearby." Models of guns featured in popular movies and television shows are the most fashionable ones to own. "There's no reality for these kids," one teen is quoted as saying. "Everything is fantasy, killing doesn't mean anything" (Barret).

For children growing up in this environment, guns are an unquestioned part of everyday life. A Manhattan six-year-old arrived at his elementary school one day "with a loaded .25 caliber semiautomatic pistol tucked in his belt. He said he needed to have something for 'show-and-tell.' The boy did not even think that he had done anything wrong" (Butterfield and Turner).

Gun problems are unquestionably most severe in large urban areas, but educators in rural areas and peaceful residential suburbs are not immune to the problem. Statistics compiled by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence indicate that gun-related incidents occurred in thirty-five states and the District of Columbia, not just in a few big cities. For example, DeKalb Junior-Senior High School, a Missouri school with an enrollment of two-hundred, seemed safe and secure until a bright, slightly overweight twelve-year-old, harassed and taunted by other children, brought a .45-caliber automatic to school and fired five shots during his first-period social studies class, killing a classmate before he shot himself (Greenbaum and others). It *can* happen anywhere.

Gangs, Drugs, and Violence

The separate, yet overlapping problems of gangs and drug trafficking are major threads in the complex tapestry of escalating violence. In the past twenty-five years, gangs have spread from the nation's major metropolitan areas to smaller cities and suburbs. Meanwhile, the booming traffic in illegal drugs has fueled violent clashes between gangs and police and between rival gangs—with innocent bystanders as all-too-frequent victims. These deadly battles have spilled over into schools, where violence used to consist of an occasional fistfight. "The problem can erupt anywhere at almost any time," warns Clarence Terhune, director of the California Youth Authority (Kay McKinney 1988).

Gang expert Irving Spergel (1989) defines *gangs* as "juveniles and young adults associating together for serious, especially violent, criminal behavior with special concerns for 'turf'." Turf can be a physical territory, a criminal enterprise such as drug trafficking, or both.

Variations among Gangs

Gangs vary tremendously in composition and activities. A gang may have a few members or thousands, ranging in age from preteen to adult. All races and ethnic groups are represented. Hispanic gangs are most heavily concentrated in Southern California; Asian gangs arise in cities with large populations of recent Asian immigrants, such as New York, San Francisco, and Seattle. The Crips and Bloods, rival black gangs that originated in Los

Angeles, are heavily involved in drug trafficking (National School Safety Center 1988). White supremacist skinhead gangs usually have few members but make headlines with their hate-filled rhetoric and violent acts.

The vast majority of gang members are male. Although many gangs have female auxiliaries and some independent female gangs exist, males are almost exclusively responsible for gang-related violent crimes (Spergel).

Most gangs are composed of members from a single ethnic background, but some interracial gangs exist. According to Tacoma school counselor Jim Fulton, "Tacoma gangs are blowing the minds of most of the [black] gangs in California because they are now equal opportunity employers. They want females, they want whites, they want anyone."

Common Elements in Gangs

Despite their differences, all gangs have elements in common. They offer kids status, acceptance, and self-esteem they haven't found elsewhere. In poorer communities, a breakdown of family and community structures may leave kids particularly susceptible to gang recruitment. But gangs also form in affluent areas among kids who feel alienated from friends and families (Stover 1986).

"Wherever you have kids," says Portland School Police Chief Steve Hollingsworth, "you have people who have some of these basic problems. Black, white, or Asian, they have the same basic needs, and the gang seems to offer fulfillment." Most gang members, says Hollingsworth, were troubled, acting-out youth even before they joined. (See sidebar on next page for exceptions.)

Gang members proudly announce their membership through distinctive dress and behaviors. Bandanas and shoelaces of specific colors, jewelry, tattoos, jargon, and hand gestures all may indicate gang affiliation. Many members carry weapons, both for potential use and to bolster their "macho" image. Members mark their territory with spray-painted graffiti or gang symbols. Turf lines are usually drawn in neighborhoods, but gang rivalries are also fought out in schools.

Symbolic challenges are as real as concrete ones: defacing gang graffiti or wearing the colors of a rival gang may elicit violent retribution. Gang members kill—and are killed—defending the honor of their gangs. "They have a warrior mentality, they feel they're dying for the cause," Hollingsworth says. "And the other part of it is, many don't feel they have a whole lot to live for."

Financial gain is another motive for gang involvement, especially for impoverished youths with poor education and few job opportunities (McKinney). Traditionally, many gang members engaged in criminal activi-

Peer-Group Pressure Takes on a New Dimension

Not all kids who join gangs are troubled misfits looking for a place to belong. In some areas, gangs are such an integral part of the community that joining is normal. This is the case in parts of Chicago, according to Roberto Rivera, director of the Chicago Intervention Network. "From the grandfather to the father to the son, it was, 'I'll be in the gang, too, when I grow up.' It's not got a stigma" (Greenbaum and others).

In other cases, kids join gangs unwillingly, because it's simply too dangerous not to. "I just had a kid in my office this morning," related a counselor in a Pacific Northwest high school. 'I don't know what I'm gonna do,' he said. 'The Bloods want me to join their gang; they want to court me in tonight. The Crips are after me to join their gang. I don't want to belong to any of those gangs! And they're gonna kill me, or beat me up, or hurt me, if I don't belong to one of them."

The same counselor described how another boy handled this situation. "He told them, 'Look, you guys, I'm not going to go gang banging with you.' That is, he's not going to go out and get in fights, he's not going to sell dope, he's not going to shoot other people. 'I can be your friend and you can be my friend, but I don't do gang-banging.' And apparently the gang is loose enough that they went ahead and said, 'That's fine.'

"Do you know what courting in and courting out means? If you want to go in, you have to go through an initiation. He told me two guys courted him in: they blacked his eyes, they beat him up pretty good. You get courted out by the entire gang, and you're lucky if you can walk afterwards. So he's going to try to 'slide sideways.' When he completes his vocational school program, he's just going to move to another location and avoid the 'courting out.'

"I asked him what he would tell other people about gangs. 'It's a one-way road to death,' he said."

ties such as car theft and burglary, but in recent years drug dealing has overshadowed other types of gang-related crimal activity (Spergel).

Gangs and Drug Trafficking

The vast sums of money available through drug dealing have increased both the size of gangs and their age range, as adults stay in longer and new members join—including increasing numbers of juveniles. Children as young as eight and nine years old are recruited by older gang members. Knowing that legal penalties for juveniles are very lenient, gangs use children as lookouts and errand runners for drug sales and distribution—often on school grounds—and as mobile "weapons depositories" (California Department of Education).

Many kids are willing recruits who are lured by money just like the adults, but who are even less aware of the risks associated with gang membership. As one Los Angeles police officer points out, "How do you tell a kid who's making $500 a week guarding a rock [cocaine] house that he really ought to be in school or that he ought to be getting up at 4 a.m. every day to ride his bicycle around the neighborhood to deliver the morning paper?" (National School Safety Center).

Drug trafficking makes traditional turf battles bloodier by providing

the money for sophisticated weaponry, and it creates new sources of conflict as rival gangs fight over lucrative drug territories (McKinney). It also contributes to gangs spreading out geographically.

The Spread of Gangs

Most experts agree the spread of gangs isn't deliberately planned; gangs are too loosely organized for that. Rather, pressure by police and competition with rivals encourage gang members to seek new, easier territories (Dan Bryant 1989). "It's easier to be intimidating in a small town," says Ronald Stephens, executive director of the National Safe School Study Center (Anthony Moriarty and Thomas Fleming 1990).

Ironically, according to Moriarty and Fleming, the schools themselves provide one key mechanism by which gangs spread: transfer students from gang-ridden cities. Families move out of the innercity in search of better economic opportunities, or send their children to live with relatives in a deliberate attempt to remove them from the danger of gangs and urban crime. Insecure in their new environments, these adolescents may fall back on gang trappings and bravado to build themselves up and impress others. According to Moriarty and Fleming, "Marginal students who are established residents of the suburban community are likely to be intrigued by the new student who flaunts gang symbols...and they are vulnerable to whatever influence comes their way." The result: formation of a new gang.

Students attending schools that have been infiltrated by gangs learn the rules quickly or pay the price. For example, in a Pacific Northwest high school recently taken over by the Crips gang, a naive ninth grader walked down the hall wearing a red hat and jacket—the color worn by the Bloods' gang, arch-rival of the Crips. "Hey, man, you claimin'?" challenged another student. When the puzzled ninth grader didn't make an acceptable reply, the gang member delivered a punch that broke the other student's nose, resulting in a concussion and a trip to the hospital. The injured student's parents chose not to file charges—after receiving death threats if they took action.

Chapter 2

Dealing with Chronic Problems

This chapter and the next one focus on dealing with violence-related problems that have an established pattern in the school district, such as violent crime by students or intruders, the prevalence of weapons, and established gangs. Chronic problems are often interrelated, have roots in the community, and require coordinated action by schools, community, and police. At the same time, effective actions often have an effect on more than one of these problems.

For convenience's sake, general antiviolence actions are discussed in this chapter, and actions specifically aimed at established gang activity are dealt with in chapter 3. Of course, in the real world there is no clear division.

Acknowledging the Problem

Before action of any sort can be taken, school authorities must acknowledge that the problem exists. For some districts this is the most difficult step. Hurdles to overcome include ignorance, incomplete definition of the problem, and denial.

Ignorance

Administrators may be honestly ignorant of violent acts that occur between students. Not surprisingly, instigators prefer to attack their victims where adult witnesses can't see or hear, and as Greenbaum and others point out, kids are afraid of looking like "wimps" or "tattletales" if they go to school authorities for help.

"Only about one-third of all violent crime committed against youths is even reported to authorities, said James R. Wetzel, director of the Center for

Demographic Studies, U.S. Bureau of the Census. Victims usually regard such incidents as 'private' and 'took care of it' themselves" (Greenbaum and others).

Incomplete Definition

Adults may not think of certain types of incidents as crimes. Greenbaum and others emphasize that bullying, fighting, threats, and intimidation are not "just something all children go through...these are *crimes*. The fact that they were committed by minors upon minors does not make them less than crimes." Rubel agrees and gives an example:

> School district officials seldom differentiate between "fights" and "battery." They tend to assume that when two students are battling, they are "fighting." Both get suspended. That one of the students didn't want to "fight" does not signal the school administrator that what really took place was a criminal battery.

And, of course, kids will be even less likely to report if they are convinced adults won't take action.

Denial

A simple lack of awareness is relatively easy to remedy. But denial is a more difficult barrier to overcome. Denial on the part of administrators can paralyze a district while problems become deeply entrenched, far more difficult to deal with than if faced at an earlier stage. In recent years, the most difficult problem for many communities to acknowledge has been the presence of gangs.

Psychologists who have studied violence and victimization explain why denial is so common. People naturally want to be safe from harm. And they want to *feel* safe, want to avoid unpleasant feelings of anxiety, fear, and vulnerability. Unconsciously we all tend to believe we are invulnerable. We tell ourselves it just can't happen to us—or to our school district.

Letting go of this illusion can be painful and frightening. But it is preferable for the illusion to be broken by education and awareness rather than by being victimized. "The reporting of crime to the public is necessary because so many citizens believe that crimes happen to someone else," writes criminologist Chester Quarles. "School staff cannot afford to be blinded by the 'it-won't-happen-to-me' syndrome. Crimes can occur in any school environment; they do not necessarily occur only in crime-ridden areas."

Once we acknowledge the possibility of violent crime, we can reestablish more realistic feelings of safety by taking measures to protect ourselves. School systems that do not report existing dangers place both students and staff at risk by giving them a false sense of security.

Assessment

Assessing the extent of school crime is the first step in developing a plan for action. As Rubel writes, "Before program planners can hit a target they have to at least SEE the target." Both qualitative and quantitative information are helpful in diagnosing current conditions. Next, written policies should be developed and a system set up for collecting data as new incidents occur. This statistical information not only helps determine what actions to take, but provides a baseline against which to evaluate the success of these actions.

Diagnosing Current Conditions

Surveys of students, staff, and parents can reveal how people perceive the present situation. For example, the National School Safety Center has prepared complementary adult and student surveys to assess the extent and nature of bullying in schools (Greenbaum and others). *Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action*, a step-by-step guide prepared jointly by the California Departments of Education and Justice (1989), includes attitude surveys for students and adults on physical and social elements of school safety. In addition, the guide provides administrators with checklists of significant behaviors and conditions.

Uniform Reporting of School Crime

Experts agree on the importance of establishing a uniform reporting system and of distinguishing between crimes and other violations of school regulations. "School administrators seldom realize that some of what is being called 'discipline' violations are really criminal violations and subject to reduction through time-tested crime prevention methods," writes Rubel. In 1983, under a grant from the National Institute of Justice, Rubel developed a "process guide" that adapted crime analysis techniques to the school environment. For each incident of school crime or student misbehavior, the type, location, and time of the incident and the students involved are recorded on an "Incident Report Form" (Patricia Kees 1986). Criminal incidents are then reported to local police as part of a cooperative anticrime effort. Later, the data can be analyzed "to identify patterns or trends and to develop intervention and prevention strategies" (Valerie Smith 1984).

Schools participating in the pilot project that tested these techniques found them helpful in pinpointing problems. "Sometimes you have a tendency to make a generalization because of one or two incidents, but with this process of incident reporting, you have hard data," said Cynthia Gernan, superintendent of Anaheim Unified School District. Florida's Duval County Public Schools also achieved "extremely satisfactory" results, with a signifi-

cant decrease in criminal activity during the first two years of the program (Kees).

Security expert Peter Blauvelt (1987) describes a similar information reporting system in detail, using clear, layman's language and including a sample "Incident Profile Form." He summarizes the process as follows: "What happened? When did it happen? Where did it happen? Who was involved? Why did it happen? What action was taken?" Blauvelt explains each step of the information gathering process and the reasons each piece of data is important. For example, the purpose of documenting what action was taken is to

> establish the credibility of the reporting administrator.... The action report becomes even more important if a civil lawsuit develops from the incident. Generally, lawsuits develop long after the actual incident—sometimes years. It is a comforting feeling to open a file and find a detailed report, including the actions taken in response to the incident.

Identifying Problem Teachers

In addition to identifying problem students, analysis of data can identify problem teachers. According to Milwaukee School Security Chief Jerry Mourning, "a disproportionate number of discipline referrals are made by a few teachers in a school. Usually 3 percent of the staff is responsible for 50 percent of the referrals"(Stover 1988). The object isn't to blame these teachers, but to help them. Arrangements are made for them to attend training sessions in classroom management.

Beaverton, Oregon: Working with Limited Funds

The ideal data reporting system would track all types of disciplinary violations, but it's not an all-or-nothing proposition. The Beaverton (Oregon) School District recently implemented a data tracking system for suspensions and expulsions. "We've broken suspensions down into twenty-six different reasons," says security administrator Bob Ray, "so we can see, say, if we're getting more assaults than we did in the past, and we track where they occur and what time of the day they occur, to see if we need to boost our prevention activities in a particular area. Eventually, if we get funding, it would be nice to track everything."

Deterring Violent Crime

Deterrents to crime include making the target harder for a criminal to find, tightening supervision, setting discipline standards, training staff mem-

bers in prevention of violence, and emphasizing each person's responsibility to safeguard himself or herself against violence.

Target Hardening

"Target hardening is a security concept that significantly decreases, deters, or prevents crime against specific individuals or specific institutions. A soft target is an easy target; a hard target is a difficult one," explains Quarles. "Target hardening sends criminals or delinquents away from you. They want a maximum return on a minimized risk and will go elsewhere to find an easier target when you harden up."

Controlling and monitoring physical access to the school is the first step in target hardening. Ideally, a school building should be designed with crime prevention in mind. "Schools need to be designed so that the supervisors have maximum visual access and can see down several hallways from one point," says the superintendent of a school district where a teenaged gunman killed two children. "I think a school shaped like a wheel, with the supervisor's office in the hub and halls radiating out like spokes, is the best design," he said (Suzanne Harper 1989).

In existing buildings, access and egress can be restricted to monitored areas. Emergency exit doors can be fitted with electromagnetic locks set to open when a fire alarm is triggered (George Gerl 1991). Measures like this will prevent intruders from entering the building or make entrance much more difficult.

If attacks after hours are a problem, Quarles suggests that a safe, supervised area be established for staff and students who stay after school. He warns teachers, especially females, against working alone in remote areas of the school complex after hours. He also recommends forming buddy teams with other teachers who are staying late, or at least locking the door of the classroom or office. Stover (1988) suggests installing silent buzzers in each classroom to enable teachers to summon help. If necessary, teachers should be required to leave the school grounds after hours. "While this may be an inconvenience, it is better than living with the consequences of robbery, assault, rape, and murder" (Quarles).

Supervision

Supervision is an excellent deterrent to crime, as well as to less serious disciplinary violations. According to Quarles, the sight of patrolling staff or security officers is psychologically effective, creating "an impression that those who commit violations are likely to get caught." School staff can be assigned to patrol problem areas such as hallways, stairwells, locker rooms, and cafeterias. Supervision of the school grounds is important whenever

students are outside. Electronic monitoring via closed-circuit television units is another option.

Volunteers such as parents may help to patrol the halls or staff a front reception desk to monitor visitors. However, as Quarles points out, this is not appropriate in schools where serious violence is likely: "People who are not trained to encounter violence may worsen rather than improve the situation." Many schools have established school security forces, and others have arranged to hire police officers to work part-time in the schools.

According to Quarles, uniformed officers are "strong deterrants to crime. Their presence is a reality as well as a symbol of other officers supporting the local school system." Unfortunately, hiring trained security officers is expensive. The New York City school system spends $43 million on a 2,050-person security staff (Stover 1988). Each school district must make choices depending on the seriousness of its particular situation. As unpalatable as it may be to divert money from educational programs to security, the safety of students and staff must come first.

Setting Discipline Standards

Experts agree on the importance of establishing and enforcing clear, consistent standards of discipline. According to Stover (1988), a general erosion of discipline usually precedes actual violence. "There's a substantial and clear pattern of behavior that goes on in a classroom for teachers that are about to get hit," Stover quotes Rubel as saying. For example, if a teacher has been sworn at or victimized by theft and robbery, that teacher is more likely to be assaulted.

Teachers and administrators who set firm limits to unacceptable behavior earn students' respect. "The three F's of good school administration include being firm, friendly and fair—in that order," write Greenbaum and others. The principal's leadership is vital in establishing consistent school discipline, both through personally demonstrating effective behavior and by ensuring that staff who need help get it.

Greenbaum and associates list these and other tips for discouraging aggression:

- Never overlook aggressive acts.
- Don't allow the aggressor to benefit from aggression.
- Pay attention to the victim while ignoring the aggressor; even negative attention only encourages further bullying.
- Confront the bully later, in private. Publicly challenging a bully may actually enhance his status with his peers.
- Provide support and protection for victims of bullying. Failing to

help encourages bullies and convinces victims that reporting aggression is useless.

- Avoid physical punishment for aggression. This legitimizes the use of force.
- Praise children for cooperative behavior and verbal resolution of conflict.
- Demonstrate cooperative, non-aggressive problem-solving methods. (1989)

Inservice Training

School security staff, police, or criminal justice experts from nearby universities may be brought in to teach practical techniques for handling violent youths. For example, teachers and administrators are frequently injured while breaking up fights and assaults, according to Blauvelt. In *Effective Strategies for School Security*, Blauvelt analyzes the mistakes staff make while attempting to break up fights and describes a six-step procedure for intervening without being injured oneself.

Peter Commanday, coordinator of professional training in New York City's Office of School Safety, teaches workshops in handling violent students. His advice includes tips on body language: approach a disruptive student diagonally, not head on; don't "jail" a student with his back against a wall; never point at the student. Commanday emphasizes the importance of listening, staying cool under verbal abuse until the student calms down. In one case, he listened to an angry tirade from a teenaged girl who had assaulted a male teacher. "I waited for her to finish, then I said, 'Anything else?' It was only then, after I had listened through all the rest, that she blurted out, 'Can you stop my stepfather from raping me twice a week?'" (Greenbaum and others).

Personal Responsibility

Whatever security measures the school may take, Quarles emphasizes that "personal crime prevention cannot be delegated to others." Individuals can safeguard themselves against violence by adopting personal target-hardening measures. Quarles summarizes these as follows:

1. Knowing about crime in your environment
2. Observing your environment at all times for threats
3. Taking appropriate countermeasures to ensure your own safety

For example, "teachers who are least likely to be victims of crime observe all their surroundings," Quarles says. "They look at each student they pass in hallways and attempt to gain at least a moment of eye contact.

The subliminal message being exchanged is that 'I know who is here and I know who you are. I can remember your features. I can identify you'."

Involving Students

Security consciousness is important for students as well as staff. "Make everyone a part of your security team," says Blauvelt; involve both students and staff in discussing security problems and plans of action. Students should be encouraged to help safeguard themselves and the school by reporting suspicious individuals and potential problems. Many violent incidents could be stopped if students were encouraged to "tip off" authorities beforehand.

Keeping Weapons out of School

"Intelligence from the kids" is also the most effective way to detect weapons, according to Detroit Public Schools Superintendent Arthur Jefferson (Butterfield and Turner). In Portland, Oregon, homeroom teachers try to develop a climate in which each student feels responsible for reporting weapons on campus. The National School Safety Center suggests schools set up a "hot line" or peer program to facilitate this type of communication (Butterfield and Turner).

Searches

Many school districts use sweep searches to locate and confiscate weapons. To facilitate searches, the Portland school board revised its policy with regard to students' right to privacy. Lockers and desks are defined as school property, available for temporary student use, but subject to periodic unannounced checks for unauthorized items such as weapons. Personal searches are authorized "if the principal has a reasonable suspicion that a prohibited item is on the student's person" (Mathew Prophet 1988a).

Preventing Concealment

Another strategy is making it more difficult to transport or conceal weapons within the schools. In Montgomery, Alabama, book bags may only be clear plastic or mesh; in Baltimore, Maryland, all book bags and coats must be left in lockers during the school day. A principal in San Jose, California, removed lockers from the high school entirely.

Metal Detectors

The use of metal detectors is both controversial and expensive, but a

number of school districts have adopted this method. Walk-through metal detectors are used at Chester High School, north of Philadelphia, and in middle and high schools in Montgomery, Alabama. In Detroit, metal detectors have been used on a widespread basis since 1985. Although Detroit school security director Frank Blount supports their use, he comments, "Everybody thinks metal detectors are the be-all and end-all. But it's just another deterrent" (Butterfield and Turner).

Stiff Penalties

Stiff penalties for weapons possession may help deter students from bringing weapons to school. "Clear school policy in regard to weapons violations is critical," emphasizes the National School Safety Center (Butterfield and Turner). School districts in a number of cities penalize students with immediate suspension or expulsion. Unfortunately, though this may reduce the schools' problem, it doesn't help the community. Says San Bernardino's John Burton, "to remove students who have weapons from school and put them on the street with their weapon is to put out the fire at school but in the process spread it into the street" (Butterfield and Turner).

Combining Forces with the Community

"The most telling predictor of a school's crime rate is the crime rate in the local community," writes California education consultant Peter Kneedler (1990). Schools by themselves can't successfully fight problems that originate outside their campuses. Not only is it more effective to join forces with community agencies and local police, but as crime prevention specialist Dolores Farrell points out, "There's not the money to do it alone" (Lawton).

Community Ties

Schools can find willing allies among private citizens. In many communities, both those already riddled with violence and those only threatened by the possibility, parents and other concerned citizens have banded together to fight crime and to organize preventive efforts. School systems can establish ties with existing community groups and seek input from parents and other citizens in developing school-based programs, in addition to collaborating with city agencies.

Brenda Turner (1989) describes cooperative anticrime efforts in a number of cities. Schools in Philadelphia work with city agencies and local community groups to fight drug-related crime and violence. In 1989, day-long meetings of parents and school personnel were held at more than two-hundred Philadelphia schools, providing a forum for discussion of a

districtwide plan to fight drug abuse. Clifton, New Jersey, developed a master crime prevention plan that included such diverse agencies as the school system, the fire department, and the parks and recreation department.

Police-School Cooperation

Local law enforcement agencies are obvious resources for school districts. Districts can benefit from police expertise by inviting officers to present security-related training sessions for school staff or educational programs for students. Police departments often provide extra security when special events create the potential for problems in neighborhoods adjoining schools. Some districts hire off-duty policemen to patrol school grounds; others have their own school security staff, who maintain close contact with local police and exchange information. It is important for schools to have an ongoing relationship with police, rather than just calling on them in the midst of a crisis.

Anthony Moriarty and Patrick Fitzgerald (1989) describe the successful police liaison program at Rich East High School in Park Forest, Illinois. At the time the program began, the middle-class Chicago suburb had not experienced major problems, but district officials decided to experiment with a police presence in the school before drug or gang problems spread from the city. Twelve officers were hired to work at the school one day per week on their days off. They were paid by the school district at an hourly rate.

Not only did the officers perform protection tasks and give valuable suggestions for improving security, but the district reaped additional unexpected benefits.

> Frankly, school executives had not expected the police officers to be as well trained and well educated as they are. Our officers—most of whom have college degrees—are competent people with a variety of skills and a great depth of expertise.... One officer gave a lecture to a business law class, and another spoke about sexual abuse to a psychology class.... by developing good relations with the kids, the officers have an advantage on the street that they didn't enjoy before. Now, when a crime is committed in the community, students are more willing to tell the cops what they know about it. (Moriarty and Fitzgerald)

Suggestions to other school districts interested in setting up such a program include the following:

1. School and police should each appoint one contact person to coordinate the program. These individuals must be personally compatible as well as being good communicators.
2. Officers selected should be able to interact with young people in a relaxed, comfortable manner.

3. Specific policies and procedures should be written delineating the officers' responsibilities and those of school personnel.
4. The community should be clearly informed about the program and reassured that having police on campus does not indicate serious problems. (Moriarty and Fitzgerald)

The Role of the State

The state can help with problems outside the scope of local agencies. State legislatures can enact or revise laws, and state agencies can provide leadership, expertise, and financial support to school districts.

Legislation

In 1985, the Illinois legislature revised its Juvenile Court Act and sections of the criminal code to crack down on juvenile and school-related crime. Penalties for assault and battery were increased for attacks on school staff or on school grounds. For any minor above the age of fourteen caught possessing or using a weapon on school grounds, the legislation orders the case automatically transferred from juvenile to criminal court. And penalties for distribution or sale of weapons or drugs were increased for offenses occurring within one-thousand feet of school property. New Jersey later established similar "safe school" zones (Cindy Tursman 1989).

Although these steps are encouraging, more needs to be done, in these states and in others. "I firmly believe that the juvenile justice system in California and in this country is totally ineffective," says Captain Raymond Gott, commander of juvenile operations for the Los Angeles sheriff's office. Gott feels reforms are necessary to prevent juvenile criminals from escaping accountability for their actions.

Sometimes loopholes exist by accident. Due to an oversight in a law passed in the 1800s, "in the state of Washington it's only a misdemeanor for a juvenile to have a handgun in school," says Tacoma school social worker Jim Fulton. "It's like jaywalking, it's no big deal." Fulton has written personally to state legislators, calling the loophole to their attention and asking them to pass corrective legislation.

State Leadership: California's Example

California became a pioneer in 1982, when it acknowledged the constitutional right of students and staff to safe schools. Unfortunately, like other states, California has been hampered by budget constraints, and for this reason districts were not legally required to adopt school safety plans.

The state has endeavored to encourage districts in this area and to

assist them with available state funds. In October 1990, *Safe Schools: A Planning Guide for Action* was mailed to all school superintendents. A joint effort of the California Departments of Education and Justice, the handbook brings together "the best thinking of law enforcement and education specialists on the subject of school safety" (Kneedler).

The model plan stresses prevention and interagency cooperation to combat gangs, weapons, drugs, and other school security problems (Lawton). It identifies four components in school safety—the personal characteristics of students and staff, and the school's physical, social, and cultural environments—and provides an overall framework for planning as well as describing specific actions.

California is offering districts "minigrants" to help implement the plan. In addition, "districts and schools may draw on the expertise of the School/Law Enforcement Partnership cadre, run jointly for several years by the state education department and the attorney general's office" (Lawton). The cadre's trained volunteers travel throughout the state, providing advice and resource materials. Ronald D. Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Council, praised California's actions and expressed the hope that other states would follow suit.

How Do You Know What Works?

School boards and administrators are eager to find strategies to fight school violence. And cities and school districts that have developed effective programs are usually happy to share their information and techniques. Unfortunately, there are few strategies of proven effectiveness, at least in terms of scientific standards.

In a 1986 paper, "School System and Police Response to High Risk and Disruptive Youth," Rubel reported that very few studies actually evaluated the effectiveness of the programs they described. He suggested that problems that require quick and decisive responses often "don't stay around long enough to design a paradigm, set up a research agenda, and fund it." Rubel concluded that if these approaches had not been "tested pragmatically" and felt to be effective, they would have been dropped without ever being written up. "We can only suspect that they work," he says, "because they are being promulgated."

The real-life school environment is full of numerous uncontrollable, rapidly changing variables. Educators and police can't wait to act until perfectly designed and tested studies appear. In the meantime, relying on the judgment and practical experience of police and education professionals to supplement the available "hard data" seems a reasonable alternative.

Chapter 3

Controlling Gangs

Bullying, robbery, extortion, weapons possession, attacks on teachers and students, fights between students—all these types of school violence may occur apart from gang activity. But gangs provide a tenacious framework in which such violence takes root and thrives. What might have been isolated incidents, triggered by personal anger and frustration, become meaningful skirmishes in an ongoing war. Every slight to the gang's honor justifies more violence, followed by escalating retribution from rival gangs—often with innocent students and teachers as victims.

As with other problems, gang activity must be acknowledged before it can be fought. But for many school districts, the presence of gang activity is very difficult to acknowledge.

The Danger of Denial

Again and again, gang experts emphasize the danger of denial. For example, Albuquerque, New Mexico, is one of forty-nine cities to which Los Angeles gangs have recently spread. According to Chris Baca, director of Albuquerque's Youth Development, Inc., by the time the community admitted that it had a gang problem, gangs were securely established and much harder to fight (McKinney).

"That's typical of a lot of communities," says Portland School Police Chief Steve Hollingsworth. "You know, when you take pride in your community, and somebody's trying to convince you you've got [gangs]—it's just like cancer, people go into denial."

A school employee in another Pacific Northwest city, who asked to remain anonymous, listed the reasons he feels his district denies the problem:

> One, they probably can't get the money to do what they want to do to correct it. Number two, they don't want the bad press associated with

> gang problems. Number three, I guess they're just resistant to change. And finally, a lot of the people now doing our school security jobs would not be able to do them if we were required to have fully commissioned police persons.

Although this employee has repeatedly offered to research gangs and prepare an informational program for his district, he says there has been "absolutely no response. It's like I swore in church.... But you can't put the lid on the smelly garbage can and say it's gone. It still stinks."

It's No Shame to Ask for Help

Even school boards that acknowledge the problem privately may try to avoid publicity and handle the problem internally, reports Stover (1986). But a low-key approach gives the wrong message to school principals, according to Roberto Rivera, director of the Chicago Intervention Network. "Without school board reassurances that principals' calls for help won't reflect adversely on their careers," Rivera says, "school administrators are reluctant to step forward when gang activity gets out of hand" and admit they've been unable to maintain order in their schools (Stover 1986).

As the first step in a ten-step gang prevention plan, Moriarty and Fleming advise the following:

> BE HONEST. Admit to the potential for problems in your school.... Some school executives put a higher priority on maintaining a squeaky-clean reputation with the public than on preventing gangs. But this narrow view of community relations overlooks the fact that the community can be the school's greatest ally.
>
> In our experience, most communities will judge school officials as perceptive and enlightened if they address the issue of suburban gangs before their schools have a problem. School officials also are more likely to obtain community support for their antigang efforts if they accurately apprise community members about the seriousness of the phenomenon before any problem occurs. Community leadership is a powerful force. The school official who doesn't play straight with community leaders is in serious trouble. (1990)

This advice is just as valid if gangs or other problems are already established.

Teaming up to Fight Gangs

School districts *can't* solve the problem alone. No single agency can. Says Portland's Hollingsworth, "It's crazy for a law enforcement entity to

come forward and give the impression they're going to resolve this problem, because they're not. It takes all of us working together as a team, and even then it's an uphill battle."

Gang experts agree on the importance of cooperation among schools, criminal justice agencies, and community organizations. Los Angeles created an interagency gang task force to enable the various agencies working on the gang issue to discuss gang problems and possible solutions (McKinney). The governor of Oregon established a gang task force at the state level, which includes state police, Portland city and school police, and the sheriffs' offices of counties serving the Portland metropolitan area (Prophet 1990).

Early findings from the research of gang expert Spergel indicate that a coordinated effort is more likely to be successful (Bryant). However, Spergel also contends that "straight suppression and straight intervention just don't work"(Moriarty and Fleming). Gangs are "orphan institutions" that kids turn to if they aren't making it in the mainstream of society. The most successful programs focus on helping younger kids do better in school and providing older kids with training and jobs, thereby addressing conditions that give rise to gangs.

In the meantime, while long-range preventive efforts are being implemented and given time to work, gang activity *can* be forced out of the schools. Fourteen-year-old Los Angeles student Jesse Ugalde described what a difference this makes in his life. "Every day when I walk to school, I have to be watching my back," he told educators at a recent school safety conference. "But when I go around the corner where Lennox Middle School is, the feeling in the back of my mind goes away, because...I know nothing could happen to me [there]. I probably feel safer at school than in my own house" (Lawton).

School Districts as Leaders

School boards and superintendents can take an important leadership role in the community. Portland, Oregon, was one of many cities that experienced an explosion of gang activity in the mideighties. After the shooting death of a student at Portland's Grant High School in April 1987, Superintendent Matthew Prophet confronted the specter of gang infiltration.

Prophet named gangs as the most serious problem facing the school district at a city council meeting preceding the next school year. "It took a lot of courage to go into the arena there," says Hollingsworth. In February 1988, Prophet held a press conference to announce steps the district was taking to protect its students and staff. He also called on other agencies to

join in the antigang fight.

Several years of cooperative effort have not "solved" Portland's gang problems. As Hollingsworth says, "There's still a lot more work that needs to be done." But gang violence has been driven out of the schools.

Keeping Gangs from Moving in

Administrators in the Beaverton School District, just southwest of Portland, are all too aware of the threat of spreading gangs. "We have some students at each of our three high schools whom we know are at least associates," says security administrator Bob Ray, "but they don't 'fly the colors'; they don't misbehave. As long as they follow the rules, nothing's going to happen and they can go to school."

Nonetheless, the district does its best to keep the gang presence from increasing. Nonstudent gang members who try to recruit students are told they are trespassing and ordered off school grounds. The local police then enforce the order.

A different tactic is used to block gang members from enrolling. By Oregon law, says Ray, a student under eighteen has no automatic right to attend school unless his or her parent or guardian resides within the district. Beaverton has used this tactic several times to refuse enrollment to juveniles suspected of being gang recruiters.

In one case, however, a youth over eighteen established residence and was legally entitled to enroll. "We did not deny him access," Ray explains. "When talking with the student, it became clear that the regular high school program probably was not the best suited to him. So we set up an alternative educational program and arranged for him to take his courses at the local community college.

"He said 'Gee, thanks, I like that,' and then disappeared and never came back. So that would indicate to me that his purpose was to make contact with students at the high school, not to get an education."

School officials in Eugene, Oregon, used legal action to block the spread of gang activity. On October 2, 1989, eighteen-year-old Robbie Robinson enrolled at South Eugene High School. An alert student tipped off an administrator that the two buddies accompanying Robinson were wearing gang colors.

When administrators contacted Jefferson High School in Portland, the teen's previous school, they learned he had an extensive record of gang activity and had been barred from finishing high school there. On Robinson's first day of school attendance, a group of seven additional teens, dressed in gang fashion, entered and strolled through the halls. One of them

announced that he, too, planned to enroll.

Principal Don Jackson suspended Robinson. A week later, in the first such action in the nation, the school board sought an injunction in Lane County Circuit Court to bar the student permanently from the city's schools, not on the basis of any specific actions, but because "his mere presence at the school in clothing associated with gang membership constitutes a danger to the health and safety of students" (Jeff Wright 1989). The injunction was granted on November 8.

Some citizens expressed concern about the constitutionality of the ruling, but members of the local chapter of the NAACP and of the Community Coalition for the Prevention of Gangs applauded the action. Said Jackson, "You don't ungang a community. We may not be able to keep it out, but at least we have to try."

Antigang Actions

The antiviolence tactics described in the previous chapter will help in controlling gang violence, but more specific antigang policies are also required.

Banishing Gang Regalia

Experts unanimously agree that the school must be established as neutral ground. Any activities related to gang membership should be banned, not just weapons, violence, and illegal activity, but also gang-identified clothing, hairstyles, colors, insignia, and hand gestures. School staff can expect to be tested constantly, with changing and subtle forms of gang symbols.

Graffiti should be painted over immediately. At Lincoln High School in Los Angeles, school property, including restrooms, is checked for graffiti on a daily basis. "We make sure graffiti is gone within an hour of finding it," says administrative assistant Hope Ricewasser. "That way, the gang who did it doesn't have the satisfaction of knowing other people even saw it" (National School Safety Center).

Such items as red shoelaces, bandanas, and graffiti may seem like trivial things to battle over. But banishing them from school grounds is a deadly serious business. Gang symbols announce, "This is our territory and we can do what we want here." Not only are they intimidating to students who do not belong to gangs, they can directly provoke violence. Defacing a rival gang's graffiti or painting it upside-down is a challenge to battle. By refusing to permit gang symbols, school officials remove fuel for gang rivalries and send the message, "*We* are the ones in charge."

Teen Fashion or Gang Attire?

Often ordinary teen clothing is altered to become gang attire. In Milwaukee, reports Stover (1986), school officials finally banned hats altogether, because the angle at which a hat was cocked signaled gang membership. At the same time, elements of gang dress are being integrated into pop culture. "More and more, gang stuff is becoming a fashion statement," says Cathryn Schar. "Overalls with one suspender down were white supremacist attire; now you see it in teen magazines" (Stover 1986).

Recently, professional athletic team jackets have become both a hot fashion item and an indicator of gang membership. "Gang members have become much more adept at circumventing those who would cause problems for them, so rather than wearing do-rags, now they wear silver-and-black Raiders jackets," says South Eugene High School's Jackson. Does that mean that anybody who supports the team should be questioned as to whether they're gang members?

Not necessarily, according to a recent article in the *Springfield News* (Cami Swanson 1991). "Students at Thurston High School say people wearing Raiders jackets are unfairly labeled as troublemakers. 'Most people just wear it because it's the style, and they think it's cool,' says sophomore Jarah King"(Swanson). Gil Hernandez, director of marketing and community affairs for the Los Angeles Raiders, agrees. "[Black] is a very powerful and mysterious color,'" Hernandez says. "And so kids who wear black feel dominant. But that doesn't mean that all the kids who are wearing the Raiders logo are gang members'." Hernandez feels "authorities should not limit students' rights to identify with a sports team" (Swanson).

Nonetheless, hard-core gang members do wear the jackets. And "wanna-bes," youths who wish they were gang members, wear them because of their gang associations. This may be a harmless affectation in itself. But "wanne-bes" imitate gang violence, too, and some graduate to genuine gang membership. Deciding where to draw the line is a difficult job for schools.

Educating Staff

In order to cope, school personnel need up-to-date information about gang activities and symbols. One of the first actions the Portland school system took to promote gang awareness was to distribute the National School Safety Center booklet, "Gangs in Schools: Breaking Up Is Hard To Do," to staff throughout the district. Later the district made a videotape to dramatize gang hand signs and other behaviors. School police officers conduct updated gang-awareness training sessions for school staff on an annual basis (Prophet 1990). Some school districts have police give gang awareness sessions before any gang activity has appeared.

Educating Parents

Parents, too, need to be informed about gangs. The NSSC recommends that administrators send home copies of dress and conduct codes that include regulations prohibiting gang attire, to be read and signed by parents and returned. Moriarty and Fleming urge schools to provide education sessions for parents so they can recognize early signs of gang involvement. A recent *Wall Street Journal* article describes such a session conducted at Davis Middle School in Compton, California:

> "These are some of the things you should not buy for your youngsters," Mr. McCrumby advises, holding up "locs," or rapper-style sunglasses favored by gang members, "cake-cutter" combs with long metal tines that slash, and toy guns real-looking enough to draw fire from people with real ones.
>
> Most of all, Mr. McCrumby cautions, beware when your children ask for athletic jackets or caps, often a sign of gang leanings. Compton's Spooktown Crips wear the hats of the San Diego Padres; the West Side Pirus lean to Texas Tech. Look under the brim of your child's cap, Mr. McCrumby says, and you may discover his street name.... The crossed-out street name could mean the student has killed someone. (Gary Putka 1991)

New administrators assigned to Artesia High School in Lakewood, California, went door-to-door to reach parents of gang members during the summer. They personally informed both parents and students that the rules would be different when school reopened in the fall. Henceforth, school would be neutral ground: no gang insignia or colors, no gang fights. Any student fighting would be suspended—and any student joining a fight already under way would be automatically transferred to another school. "Today," says Principal Joseph Quarles, "when gang members walk onto school grounds, they leave their gang affiliations behind" (Stover 1986).

Transferring Gang Members

Splitting up gangs by transferring disruptive students may ease friction at the original school, but Spergel warns that new problems may result; a gang member may be persecuted if he is transferred to a school dominated by another gang (Stover).

In gang-ridden Compton, California, students are sometimes allowed to transfer into a school dominated by their own gang to escape a school dominated by a rival gang. "I always review the kid's record before he comes in, and I won't have any hard-core gang members," says Miller, principal of Centennial High School. "But when a parent sits in front of you with tears in his eyes and says 'I'm afraid my son will get killed,' what can you do?" (Putka).

Keeping Nonstudent Gang Members off Campus

Another way to reduce gang violence in schools is to keep nonstudent gang members away from school campuses and events. Portland's school security officers do their best to take a proactive stance, according to Hollingsworth. "In the past," he says, "we've had some kids shot—not in the schools, but by gang members loitering around on the outside.... So we've got uniformed officers out there on patrol, stopping these people, keeping them out of the area the best they can. But...it's a lot of work."

Campus Monitors

Hiring paraprofessional security aides can ease the burden on school police. Some Portland high schools had "campus monitors" years before the upsurge in gang activity. In response to the gang threat, the Portland district expanded this program, assigning monitors to all high schools and training them in antigang techniques. "Acting as the eyes and ears of the administration in and around our schools, the campus monitors watch for any individuals loitering on sidewalks, streets, and parks adjacent to school grounds," states Superintendent Prophet.

Monitors are coordinated by the school police and have the power to "ask anyone on school property without identification and valid reasons for being there to leave at once, citing and prosecuting for criminal trespass anyone who doesn't comply." Campus monitors are much more than passive observers. Like school police, they engage in a continual process of interaction with students and gang members. According to Hollingsworth, in some circumstances a monitor's actions may go far beyond his formal duties.

Information and Communication

Information and communication are the lifeblood of any antigang effort. Up-to-date information on current gang activities must be circulated rapidly among school administration, teachers, security staff, local police, juvenile court authorities, and community agencies. Much of this information is gathered in person-to-person interactions between gang members and police or security staff.

Personal Experience and Observation

Portland's Hollingsworth emphasizes the value of personal knowlege gained from observation and experience. "I may have 100 people gathered for some event—a dance, a carnival, a school athletic event—and in there I've only got two people I know to be gang-involved. I don't have to waste

my time trying to watch 100 people."

Know with whom you're dealing, Hollingsworth says. "I can say, 'I know you, I talked to you yesterday and you were speaking good English. This is baloney, you and I both know that you're trying to con me'."

Establishing Relationships with Gang Members

Gang members can provide police and campus monitors with valuable information, says Hollingsworth, if security staff are able to establish rapport with them. For example, a gang member may tell someone on the security force, "Hey, so-and-so's coming up here tonight with a gun. There's supposed to be a fight up here tonight." When police receive that kind of information, they can send officers to the location as a deterrent rather than wait to respond until after an incident has occurred.

Not everyone possesses the attitude and personal skills necessary to establish rapport with gang members. A good school police officer needs an impressive array of skills, experience, and flexibility. "If you act like a jerk out there, you're going to get treated like one," Hollingsworth says. "What we look for is officers who are comfortable interacting with people, who have 'people skills,' who have worked with kids before. We want a couple years of college; we particularly like it if they've enhanced their communicative skills. We need to be aware of our nonverbal skills, too."

Good officers don't automatically treat gang members as enemies. "We don't want to come in as if we're an occupying army," says Hollingsworth. "We're talking about some real good, neat kids who unfortunately have adapted to this way of life, and it's consuming them."

Some former gang members who have successfully turned their lives around credit interactions with officers as crucial elements in that change. Hollingsworth believes that what has a positive impact on some gang members is "the willingness of officers to take a few minutes to talk with them, without badgering and belittling them, but treating them as equals; setting some understanding of what's acceptable and what isn't...helping them find a job, interacting with the families. Showing that you care has an impact."

Other gang experts confirm that police officers can play a significant role in the lives of troubled youths. Ronald Huff, who conducted a two-year study of Ohio gangs, was told by a number of exgang members "that police officers who took a personal interest in them and interacted with them in nonarrest settings were often instrumental in their decisions to leave their gangs" (Bryant).

Sharing Information with Other Agencies

Gang-related incidents that occur in the neighborhoods often spill over

into the schools. For example, a weekend argument in Philadelphia continued at school on Monday morning, culminating in a classroom gang fight. One student was stabbed and two students were hospitalized with head injuries. A fourth was killed later that evening in retaliation for the stabbing (Stover 1986). Obtaining information about gang rivalries helps school authorities to head off some potential problems.

Community antigang programs are invaluable information sources in larger cities. For example, the Philadelphia Crisis Intervention Network fields teams of youth workers, most of whom are exgang members who patrol the neighborhoods and communicate with police using two-way radios. In cities that do not have communitywide programs, such as Milwaukee, Wisconsin, schools must rely on local police and their own security forces. In Compton, California, school police officers sit in on local police briefings on a daily basis to keep up on gang incidents. In some cases, based on the information they have, school officials contact gang members at home and suggest they stay away from school for one day or more (Putka).

Portland's school police have developed a computerized gang-tracking system. According to Prophet, "The system identifies and tracks gang members who operated in and around schools, providing information on suspected gang members by real name, gang nickname, other personal identifiers, clothing, associates, vehicles, weapons carried, threat level, criminal activities, and so on." The information is shared with law enforcement agencies as well as school administrators, though it is not available to the general public.

Agencies share information with their counterparts in different cities and states. For example, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention holds periodic national conferences that bring together gang experts and representatives of schools, cities, and law enforcement agencies from around the country. Representatives of police departments and other agencies from cities all over Oregon and Washington meet on a monthly basis for an Interagency Gangs Intelligence Meeting, held at the Portland Public Schools administration building.

Agencies also exchange information in other ways. When gang activity increased in Portland, school police officers were sent to Los Angeles to ask local agencies about techniques they had found effective. Portland now receives inquiries from other cities such as Tacoma, Washington.

The National School Safety Center booklet, *Gangs in Schools: Breaking Up Is Hard To Do,* lists addresses and phone numbers of a large number of antigang agencies around the country that may be contacted for information.

Media Policy

Media exploitation of gang problems can cause problems for schools. While honesty is desirable, sensationalized accounts designed to sell more newspapers or grab television viewers' attention do schools a disservice. Schools should develop a clear media policy, communicate it to media representatives, and ask for their cooperation.

Prophet describes Portland's actions. District officials informed members of the media about problems caused by media insensitivity and asked for cooperation. "We contacted editors and news directors to discuss coverage of gang problems.... We pointed out that although journalists and others have a constitutionally protected right to publish, no constitutional provision or law gives them special rights to access." The district reminded media representatives that principals have authority to deny access if they feel media presence would interfere with the educational process. Like other citizens, reporters must report to the school office and request permission before conducting business on campus. Members of the school district public information department were the proper spokespersons in case of school disturbances.

Chapter 4

Crisis Situations

When Patrick Purdy walked onto the grounds of a Stockton, California, elementary school in January of 1989, he brought every school administrator's worst nightmare to life. Bullets from the mentally unbalanced gunman's assault rifle killed five children and wounded thirty others.

Violent attacks of this magnitude are rare, but when they occur, their effect on school and community are devastating. Violent crimes like rape and robbery are crises on a smaller scale. School districts and individuals alike should consider the possibility of crisis situations and plan how to respond. Providing counseling and support in the aftermath of a crisis will assist the recovery process of individuals and the community.

Deterrence and Prevention

The "target hardening" measures described in chapter 2 decrease the likelihood of intruder violence. Monitoring access and supervising students outside the building are especially important. Harper suggests pruning shrubs and trees on school grounds to eliminate hiding places, installing convex mirrors where halls intersect to enable teachers and administrators to see around corners, and using wrought iron fencing to provide security without giving schools a "prison look." Measures to keep weapons out of school also make serious student-initiated incidents less likely.

Education consultant Gerl recommends that administrators be alert for any unusual events and watch for patterns that may foreshadow intruder violence. For example, before his shooting spree Patrick Purdy parked his station wagon across the street from the Cleveland Elementary School playground and set it on fire.

Quarles advises individuals to avoid appearing to be "good victims":

don't display gold chains or other valuables; don't carry a big stack of term papers with both hands; be alert and observant. Knowing the classic pattern of a criminal attack is also helpful. The first stage, the "invitation," may appear superficially innocuous. For example, an attacker may approach a potential victim and ask a question such as, "Excuse me, can you give me directions?" If it is late at night or no one else is around, to stop and respond may jeopardize your safety; instead, keep walking and tell the person to ask for directions at the office. This response will throw off the attacker's timing and may cause him to abandon his plan.

Even the best deterrence efforts can't totally eliminate the possibility of violence, and putting too much emphasis on security may frighten children unnecessarily. As Portland Schools Public Affairs Specialist Jim Voight says, "Until we put up the barbed wire and watch towers around our schools, there's nothing to prevent anybody from walking in and doing damage to our kids or staff members. But I wouldn't want to live in a community like that."

Preparing for a Crisis

Every school and district should prepare for the possibility of violent crises. Not only will a plan help a school survive a crisis, but the very existence of a plan helps protect the school from legal liability.

Major elements in a crisis plan include assigning specific roles to staff members, planning for rapid communication, and training staff and students. The NSSC Resource Paper *School Crisis Prevention and Response* (1989) is an excellent resource for crisis planning. Schools may also seek advice from local security experts or police.

Assigning Roles

Administrators should designate staff members to take on specific roles in case of emergency. Both the tasks and the personnel responsible should be described in writing, including backups should key staff be absent. According to the NSSC, important tasks include informing administrators in other schools about the emergency, going to hospitals where injured students have been taken, coordinating transportation needs, and notifying parents and spouses (Harper).

Communication

Communication is one of the most important elements in responding to a crisis. Schools must be able to communicate quickly and accurately with staff and students, parents, law enforcement and emergency services, and media.

Within the School. Experts agree on the value of having intercoms in all classrooms. Because there was no intercom in a Virginia school where a student brought a gun to school and shot a teacher, the principal had to personally go from classroom to classroom telling students to lie down on the floor (Harper). When intercoms exist, a code phrase can be used to inform teachers of an emergency. Walkie-talkies can link yard supervisors with administrators or school police, and a bullhorn is useful for communicating with large groups of people.

Between Schools and Other Agencies. Colorado superintendent Victor Ross (1987) testifies to the value of a two-way radio system. When a sniper fired at students at another school in his district, Ross was able to drive to the besieged school, communicate with the principal and school secretary inside, and relay updated information to his office to be passed on to media and parents, all via his car radio. Ross recommends that each school have a radio in case telephones go dead in an emergency, noting that "a dead telephone system is an emergency in itself." However, two-way radios should not be used after receiving a bomb threat because the radio signal can detonate electric blasting caps (Harper).

The NSSC suggests schools have at least one unlisted telephone line for official use in crisis situations. Portable telephones can be used even if phone lines are down. Other alternative means of communication include fax machines and computers with modems. An emergency communication kit should include lists of emergency telephone numbers and a local telephone directory.

Ross recommends learning how local police and emergency services work before a crisis occurs. "I've learned that we can get faster response by calling the precinct nearest a school rather than the main switchboard at police headquarters. That's good to know."

With Parents. Establishing a procedure for reuniting children with parents after a crisis is especially important. Chaos resulted following a shooting incident in Pinellas Park, Florida: "Students were given conflicting instructions, then finally sent home. Parents who heard reports on radio and television rushed to the school to find their children, many of whom had already gone home."

At Cleveland Elementary School after the Purdy tragedy, children were released to their parents systematically, one class at a time, with a parent or guardian required to sign for each child. "It had to be agonizing for the many parents who had to wait and wait," said the school's principal, but the alternative is mass hysteria" (Harper).

Media. Often the news media become channels of information for parents as well as for the general public. The NSSC reminds administrators to remember the right of the public to know and understand what has happened. Communications consultant Walter St. John suggests that principals develop a fact sheet with background information on the school and district to give to reporters, and to plan in advance where to hold news conferences.

Rumors spread with amazing rapidity, says St. John, and accurate information should be given out as soon as possible. Undue delays may cause the public to suspect a coverup. He advises administrators not to try to avoid blame or appear interested in protecting the school's reputation above all else. It is best to acknowledge the gravity of a situation, but don't panic or overreact.

Training Staff and Students

Once emergency procedures have been developed and written down, staff should be given inservice training. Many emergency procedures may seem like common sense, but, as Ross points out, people can panic or freeze when faced with the unexpected. Training should be given part-time employees, substitute teachers, and bus drivers as well as full-time teachers and administrators.

Staff. Staff can benefit by learning about the classic stages in hostage-taking, rape, and robbery, and the actions most likely to result in survival. According to Quarles, statistics show that the best response to robbery and hostage-taking is to remain calm and passive and obey the attacker's orders. Robbery is often perpetrated by young and inexperienced delinquents, only interested in money but likely to overreact out of their own anxiety. In over two-thirds of robberies, victims are uninjured or only slightly injured; resistance drastically increases the odds of serious injury or death.

Hostage-taking incidents are most dangerous in the initial moments, again because of the nervousness of the abductors. Remaining calm is all the more important if the lives of children or other teachers are at stake. Although the hostage experience is terrifying, 98 percent of all hostages are eventually freed. Quarles urges school staff taken hostage to try to remain calm and trust the skills of police hostage negotiating teams.

Authorities are divided as to the best response in case of rape. Sadistic offenders experience increased pleasure at resistance; other perpetrators may be thwarted by resistance or shouting, or even talked out of it. Victims who resist, says Quarles, are more likely to be injured; on the other hand, they may have less emotional difficulty coping with postrape trauma than those who did not resist. Quarles urges all school staff to plan their response to a

possible robbery, rape, or hostage taking.

Students. Students should also be drilled periodically in emergency procedures. At Fairfax Elementary School in Mentor, Ohio, to avoid alarming students unnecessarily, the euphemistic phrase "Earthquake drill!" is used to signal students to duck under their desks. Principal Patricia Busher of Cleveland Elementary School feels that children followed the adults' instructions better during the Purdy attack because of having experienced regular emergency drills (Harper).

Handling the Aftermath

Crisis planning should include preparing to meet victims' psychological needs in the aftermath of violence. Whether the entire school or only a single person has been traumatized by violence, counseling services and social support make a significant difference in the recovery process.

Healing the Community

The NSSC describes the steps schools need to take once the crisis is over. Schools should offer counseling services to students and families, not only immediately, but for months after a crisis, as posttraumatic stress symptoms can last for up to two years (Harper). Training in the grief process will enable teachers to better help their students.

Children who have experienced violence display symptoms of varying severity, depending on the extent of their exposure. They may experience nightmares, have difficulty in concentrating, act out aggressively or become withdrawn, and refuse to participate in class. Guilt is a common reaction, whether or not the child actually witnessed the incident.

Though confused and frightened by their feelings, children often don't talk about them. Therefore, it's important for adults to initiate the process. Mental health experts recommend that schools reopen the day after an incident and provide counseling and information for several days. Teachers can lead entire classes in discussing feelings of sadness or anger. After a crisis, teachers should monitor students' behavior and refer especially troubled children for individual counseling.

Schools should also arrange for counseling for parents and families of students. After the Stockton shooting, Cleveland School set up a twenty-four-hour hotline and opened a counseling center in a nearby church. Schools should be prepared for a resurgence of anxiety on the anniversary of the event or when a similar event happens elsewhere.

The emotional needs of school staff are often overlooked after a crisis.

Many staff will also need counseling. Staff recovery is doubly important, says posttraumatic stress expert Robert Pynoos, because children often carefully observe and take cues from their teachers when processing a traumatic event. Pynoos also points out that school administrators may repress their own feelings due to the pressure of immediate responsibilities, then experience delayed reactions once the school has returned to normal functioning. When their feelings start to surface, it's important to provide them with psychological assistance (Harper).

Supporting the Individual Victim

Victims of violent crime need emotional support as much as victims of an all-school crisis, but they don't always get it. Insensitive and unsympathetic reactions by administrators and coworkers can compound the emotional trauma of the attack and lengthen the recovery process.

Psychologist June Feder (1989) explains that when a school employee is attacked on site, this leaves their coworkers feeling vulnerable. Unconsciously they may try to dissociate themselves from the victim, pulling away emotionally and looking for some action or mistake on the victim's part that could have precipitated the attack, thereby "blaming the victim." Victimized teachers are particularly vulnerable to this because they tend to perceive an attack by a student as a professional failure.

Administrators' attitudes may also be affected by concern that the security breakdown will reflect negatively on them. As a result, victims are often treated with gross insensitivity at the very moment when they most need support and compassion. According to Feder, "Victims said they were ignored, left in offices by themselves, asked to fill out confusing forms without assistance, unaccompanied to emergency rooms even when it was ascertained that family members would not be present and, in general, treated as if they were the criminal rather than the victim."

Victims need emotional support and validation following assaults, plus practical assistance with work-related and legal procedures. Some staff may require transfers to different work settings. Ideally, schools should educate all staff members about the emotional needs of victims in addition to making counseling available.

Chapter 5

Strategies for Preventing Violence

"Crime deterrence simply stops an incident from occurring at a particular location, to a particular person, at a particular time," Quarles states. "Crime prevention means to stop a crime from ever occurring. It implies a change of heart, that a violator is no longer interested in committing a particular crime."

This chapter addresses the question: How can schools change the hearts of potential perpetrators of violence? How can the root causes of violence be attacked?

The Causes of Violent Behavior

Students act out violently for multiple reasons. Their families may be abusive and chaotic. Their communities or peer groups may accept, even encourage, violent behavior. Anger, fear, and frustration may spur them to lash out at perceived threats, to defend themselves, or take revenge. Or they may never have been taught *how* to attain goals in nonviolent ways.

In the words of Greenbaum and others, "We must teach youngsters more than simply reading, writing, and mathematics—they need to be equipped with survival skills."

Driven by necessity, many school districts are expanding their traditional role. They teach basic values and social skills along with academic subjects and provide services ranging from free lunches to counseling. They try to make schools havens of safety where children can momentarily forget the battles that rage in their neighborhoods, oases where conflicts can be resolved without knives or guns.

In cooperation with other agencies, schools are working to attack the

roots of violence. The following sections describe several notable initiatives taken by schools in Portland, Coos Bay, and elsewhere.

Portland's Gang Prevention Program

"We have got to get to kids before they get to gangs," says Los Angeles District Attorney Ira Reiner. "Once they are caught up in the violent world of the gang culture," he says, "they are, for the most part, lost forever" (Bryant).

In recent years, schools around the country have used gang prevention curricula to try to "get to kids" in the classroom. According to Spergel, there is some evidence that these curricula are successful in changing attitudes toward gangs, but it hasn't yet been established whether gang behavior is actually reduced as well. Spergel reports that antigang school programs are currently being tested in Chicago and Los Angeles.

Gang Awareness Curricula

Portland Public Schools provides gang awareness resources for classroom use. "I AM Somebody: A Comprehensive Guide to Educate Youth About the Seriousness of Gang Involvement," was used in middle and high schools starting in 1988 to give students basic information about gangs. According to Cathryn Schar, supervisor of the district's student discipline programs, children's gang sophistication has grown so rapidly that this is now somewhat outdated, at least in Portland.

"Gang Awareness and Intervention Activities," the curriculum currently used, combines the teaching of gang information with group discussion and exercises to teach values and social skills. Prophet says, "Some parents aren't comfortable with the idea that we're teaching values in school. But we get agreement when we get down to talking about which values we're teaching." Lessons in grades 3-5 focus on teaching gang characteristics and presenting alternatives to gang involvement. Lessons in grades 5-7 cover topics such as choosing friends, responding to peer pressure, solving problems through cooperation, making choices, and setting goals.

The activities may be used in the entire classroom or with small groups, with all students or with targeted at-risk children. The gang awareness lessons aren't designed to be presented as a block, but are used periodically in between academic lessons. "Just as you don't learn to read in one lesson, it takes repetition for gang awareness to soak in," says Schar.

Audiovisual Resources

Audiovisual resources are also available to teachers, some produced by

the district itself. For example, "Gang Awareness," appropriate for elementary, middle, and high school students, demonstrates "non-threatening behaviors young people should use when confronted by bullies." In "Wasted Dreams," aimed at middle and high school students, teens with spinal cord injuries resulting from gang or drug-related shootings are interviewed and suggestions are made as to how to avoid becoming a shooting victim.

After seeing gang behavior in increasingly younger children, the district hired an artist to create an entertaining assembly program for kindergarten and elementary students. "Gangs Are No Good" uses magic, ventriloquism, and audience participation to convey an antigang message.

Additional videos include anger management and peer pressure. Resources for teachers explain how to teach discipline and social skills.

Teaching Prosocial Skills

"A lot of kids need to be taught basic social skills we take for granted," says Schar. "In addition to the culture saying it's OK to be violent, they also don't have the skills *not* to be violent.

"When a child is displaying antisocial behaviors," she explains, "you can't just say 'Stop.' You also have to teach them prosocial skills. How to ask for help, how to start a conversation with another kid—that's very, very fundamental, but that's where we have to start."

Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum

Each "Second Step" violence prevention kit contains materials and instructions for teaching sixty social skills at the elementary grade level. "We know from research that violence and empathy are mutually exclusive," Schar explains. "So these violence prevention curricula focus on building empathy, along with working on impulse control and anger management."

For example, in a lower grade lesson the teacher shows the children a picture of a face. "How is this person feeling?" is the question. Other pictures show groups of children in social situations involving conflict: a child attempting to complete an assignment while another teases and distracts her, one child walking with head down while two others laugh and point. "What's happening in this picture?" The first step is simply to identify and describe emotions: exercises in empathy.

For grades 6 through 8, problem-solving is added: identifying the problem and thinking of different possible responses to the situation. When faced with conflict, many kids only see two possible responses: "fight" or "flight," reacting aggressively or totally retreating. Becoming aware of the existence of other choices—options other than violence—is a big step

(Prophet).

Communications skills are an integral part of the curricula; they are the tools with which to solve the problems. "If you feel comfortable about communicating and find yourself solving problems through communication, you won't be as apt to be carrying a weapon," says Schar. "That's a gross generalization, but it's still true."

Schar notes that there is a substantial overlap between the antiviolence and gang prevention curricula. In some cases, this overlap is useful. "Some parents' attitude is, 'There aren't gangs in my neighborhood, my kids don't need that.' But all of them perceive that violence is an issue and you can get through all sorts of gang issues with violence curricula."

Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents

The violence prevention curriculum Portland uses at the high school level was developed by Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Massachusetts commissioner of public health and a specialist in violence prevention for adolescents. It was originally tested in Boston area schools through the Boston Youth Program. The program gives students information on the causes and effects of violence and homicide and how violent interactions begin and escalate, and teaches them anger management and nonviolent problem-solving techniques. The material covered is similar to that of the Second Step program, but it is treated in a much more sophisticated fashion.

Individual schools choose when to use the curriculum, in part or as a whole. It has been adapted and simplified for use in special education classes with emotionally disturbed students. In other schools, it might be used with special groups of targeted students.

Alternative Programs

Another step Portland has taken is to require suspended students to attend an alternative educational program designed for their special needs. Schar described an experimental program that took place in spring 1990 for high school students suspended or expelled for fighting, assault, weapons violations, or gang violence.

The program was not set up specifically for gang members, but most students suspended for these reasons were hard-core members of various gangs. These suspended students were required to attend a special antiviolence program before returning to their regular schools.

The students were resistant at first, says Schar, but classes were small—no more than fifteen students—and the teachers hired had experience working with gang members. Schar describes how gang members responded to this unfamiliar environment:

> What we found is that when you take kids out of their neighborhood schools where they don't have an audience, where they don't have a reputation to uphold, then you've got a different animal altogether. They ended up being less hostile with us than they would have been at school because they could be anything they wanted to be.
>
> Also, when you take kids out of their structure, they're discomforted enough that they don't act the way they usually do. They're kind of testing, "What's going to happen here?" And so if you can bond with them while they're in that "discomfort phase," some of them become a lot more productive.

Peer Conflict Management

"We've known for a long time that peers do a good job at educating their peers," says Schar. Peers can also help their peers resolve conflicts through mediation. Peer conflict management evolved from peer tutoring programs that have been successfully used for decades. Portland's program was adapted by the Oregon Law-Related Education Project and from successful models developed in other parts of the country.

Potential conflict managers may be suggested by teachers or classmates or volunteer on their own initiative. "You want a cross-section of the whole school," explains Schar, "a socioeconomic and ethnic mix." Once selected, conflict managers are given fifteen hours of training in problem-solving and communication skills. They meet periodically with adult leaders to discuss problems and improve their skills.

Working in pairs, conflict managers act as mediators for disputing students. They do not impose a settlement on the disputants, but use a prescribed problem-solving process to help them find their own solutions. Disputants may come to them directly or be referred by school staff or classmates. Participation in the process is always voluntary. Adults are available for assistance if necessary, but normally aren't directly involved. Portland's elementary, middle, and high schools use variations on the program.

At the elementary level, pairs are assigned to watch the school yard at lunch and during recess. They wear "Conflict Manager" tee shirts and carry clipboards with a script available for easy reference. When they see other students in conflict, they offer their assistance as mediators, and if it is accepted, retreat to a quiet corner of the playground to go through the process. In middle and high schools, conflict managers work in a specially designated room. They handle disputes that have occurred anywhere on school grounds, either during office hours or by appointment.

Schar feels the program has worked extremely well. "When we teach kids to problem-solve and they practice on other kids, both people learn," she

says. In addition, "After practicing it by solving playground issues, they start using it outside the school."

Coos Bay: Creating a School Community

Marshfield Senior High School, in the Oregon coast port of Coos Bay, might seem vulnerable to the spread of gangs. Due to the transient nature of many jobs in the local economy, the high school consistently experiences a 30 percent annual turnover in student population. The infamous Raiders jackets are visible, and new students occasionally boast about being gang members. But beyond that, no gang activity has developed. According to Principal Arnold Roblan, Marshfield High has made a concerted effort to fill the needs that cause young people to turn to gangs:

> You need to find ways for kids to be successful and feel good about themselves, and sometimes schools have not done that well. Disenchanted, disenfranchised kids, those who don't have a supportive family structure, are going to try to find some place to belong, because as human beings that need is overwhelming. The schools need to recognize that as part of what we do—giving them a place to belong. If we [work on] that enough, then we won't have some of the other problems.

The school has worked to create a sense of community for its students. Two years ago a new method was adopted to help achieve this goal: the Natural Helpers program. Originally developed in the state of Washington, the program is based on identifying and developing existing "natural" support networks.

First, students are asked to list the people in the school they would talk to if they had a problem, both fellow students and adults. The names of individuals repeatedly mentioned are collected, and a group representing a cross-section of the school is invited to a weekend retreat. These "Natural Helpers" are given training in active listening and problem-solving skills, including how to recognize when the problem is beyond their ability to solve. The group meets on a biweekly basis for the rest of the year to work on additional intervention and communication skills.

"The hope is," says Roblan, "each year that we do this, we get more kids trained, and more and more have the interpersonal skills to help each other solve their own problems."

Providing Job Opportunities

Job opportunities are crucial for older adolescents. According to

Spergel, there is evidence that gang youth would choose reputable employment over crime if they had the option. Unfortunately, they usually don't have the skills and attitudes to hold good jobs. Schools may steer youths away from crime by providing job training or referrals to jobs in the community.

For example, Portland Public Schools works with the Private Industry Council to provide job-related programs for high-risk youths. "These kids are given special counseling," explained Myra Rose, principal of Portland's Grant High School, at a 1988 gang conference. "We get them ready for job interviews. We take them to the barber, buy them alarm clocks, show them they've got to brush their teeth" (McKinney).

Helping Parents and Families

Violent youths often come from troubled families—families where the parents lack the same social skills the children lack. The NSSC suggests schools offer evening parenting classes or counseling programs to help parents learn how to deal more effectively with their children. According to Schar, parents sometimes call the schools desperate for help. Some of the same prosocial skills materials used in Portland classrooms are used in parenting classes as well. In addition, teaching children prosocial skills may create a positive "ripple effect" as they practice at home what they have learned at school.

"Many of these kids have grown up in a violent environment," says Hollingsworth, "where Dad beat the heck out of Mom and terrorized the kids. We do a tremendous amount of investigation into child abuse, physical and sexual abuse. We probably handle six or seven cases a day." Training school staff to recognize and report the signs of abuse is extremely important.

Adults responsible for child abuse were usually abused as children themselves. By intervening now, schools may not only save the child; they may prevent future victims by breaking the intergenerational cycle of violence.

Helping Troubled Employees

Students are not the only perpetrators of school violence, though they may be the largest percentage. Troubled school staff are another potential source of violence, as Colorado superintendent Victor Ross realized when an irate, alcoholic school custodian threatened to "blow some people away" if his complaints weren't dealt with.

After sensitive negotiation, the employee gave up his weapons, admitted that drinking was destroying his life, and agreed to enter an alcohol rehabilitation program. "Today, he is a sober, dependable, and very grateful employe," reports Ross. "We took a chance on a man who had been with us for eight years, and we're satisfied the gamble paid off."

Ross recommends that school districts establish an employee assistance program for troubled employees. "People create terror," Ross states. "It stands to reason that the person who slips over the sanity line and threatens lives—his own or others—just as easily can be someone who works for you."

Preventing Violence in Society

Much school violence has its source in the community. But intruders who commit violence were once students themselves; schools had a hand in creating these violent adults.

In a longitudinal study spanning twenty-two years, Leonard D. Eron and L. Rowell Heusmann of the University of Chicago found a striking stability in violent behavior over time. Aggressive, bullying behavior at age eight was strongly correlated with violent and criminal behavior in adulthood.

> By the time they were thirty, these individuals were much more likely to have been convicted of crimes; to have been convicted of more serious crimes; to have more moving traffic violations; to have more convictions for drunken driving; to be more abusive toward their spouses; to have more aggressive children; and not to have achieved well educationally, professionally and socially. The results were independent of intelligence and social class as measured at age 8. (Greenbaum and others)

The prevention programs described above are too new to have produced long-term results. But if they produce the effects they promise, schools will have played an invaluable role in breaking the tragic cycle of violence. Helping children replace violent behaviors with effective, positive social skills may reduce violence, not only in the schools, but in society as a whole.

Conclusion

In the recommendations of experts and in the experiential accounts of school personnel, common elements appear again and again. The most important steps in combatting school violence can be summarized as follows:

1. acknowledging existing school violence, or the possibility of its developing in the future
2. planning ahead for all reasonable contingencies
3. developing written policies and clearly communicating them to staff and students
4. training staff (and students, if applicable) in techniques for applying those policies
5. cooperating with the community and other agencies

The teaching of prosocial skills is an exciting and promising preventive strategy and may be the nation's best hope of success in the long run. Unfortunately, since it is a long-range strategy, methods of suppression and control will continue to be necessary for years to come. It would be tragic if budget constraints forced school districts to choose suppression over prevention, instead of embracing both methods of curbing violence.

Even with the best will, expertise, and financial support, schools alone cannot eliminate violence in society. But there is no better place than in the nation's classrooms to begin the effort.

Appendix

Additional information about programs cited in this Bulletin can be obtained from the following sources:

GANG PREVENTION

"Gang Awareness & Intervention Activities for Elementary and Middle School Students"
Produced by Child Development Specialist Program
Portland Public Schools
Public Information
P.O. Box 3107
Portland, Oregon 97222

"I AM Somebody: A Comprehensive Guide to Educate Youth about the Seriousness of Gang Involvement," by Clarence Hill, Gang Consultant (middle and high school levels)
Published by Portland Redirection Program
1032 North Sumner
Portland, Oregon 97217

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

"Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum"
Grades 1-3, 4-5, and 6-8
Produced by Committee for Children
172 20th Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98122
(206) 322-5050

"Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents"
by Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M. D.
Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, Massachusetts 02160

PEER COUNSELING

Natural Helpers
Roberts, Fitzmahan and Associates
9131 California Ave., SW
Seattle, Washington 98136-2599
(206) 932-8409

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